



State of Illinois
Bruce Rauner, Governor

Illinois Department of Transportation
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Drone for the Holidays? Remember the Preflight Checklist

IDOT reminds public of safety regulations for popular Christmas gift

SPRINGFIELD – With drone sales taking off approaching the holidays, the Illinois Department of Transportation urges the public to get up to speed on safety guidelines before going airborne.

“While drones can be a lot of fun and make a great gift, they also come with a responsibility,” said Illinois Transportation Secretary Randy Blankenhorn. “Safety always should be the top priority. We are asking both recreational and commercial drone users to take some time to become familiar with a few commonsense rules and avoid running into turbulence.”

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is predicting as many as one million unmanned aerial vehicles -- drones or UAVs -- to be sold during the holiday season, making it one of the more popular gifts this year. The agency cited more than 650 incidents this year where aircraft pilots encountered UAVs while in flight.

According to federal regulations, all drones are considered aircraft, even ones purchased at your local department store. When you fly a drone in the nation’s airspace, you become a pilot. Before taking to the skies, please go through a preflight checklist:

- Do not fly your drone more than 400 feet above the ground.
- Always maintain a line of sight with the drone when you are flying
- Federal rules prohibit drones from being flown within five miles of an airport, without first contacting the airport.
- Avoid flying over large groups of people, including stadiums and sports events, or emergency response efforts, such as fires or traffic accidents.
- Do not fly under the influence.

Gov. Bruce Rauner this year created the Unmanned Aerial System Oversight Task Force to decide rules for drones in Illinois. Recommendations are due July 1, 2016. For more information on drone safety, please visit KnowBeforeYouFly.Org.

The FAA requires that UAVs used for recreational purposes to be registered prior to operation outdoors, if they are purchased on or after Dec. 21. For more information and to register, visit www.faa.gov/uas/registration

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